



## Hamilton Area Transportation Plan 2009 Update

### Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Notes November 16, 2009 – Meeting Number 5

#### Introduction

The fifth Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting for the Hamilton Area Transportation Plan (2009 Update) project was held on Monday, November 16, 2009, from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm at City Hall. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the preliminary recommendations, developed by CDM, for the transportation plan effort. The preliminary recommendations consisted of major street network (MSN) projects, transportation system management (TSM) projects, non-motorized recommendations, and policy & procedural recommendations. The preliminary recommendations were framed as a “first cut” at developing projects for both the existing and future transportation system. Jeff Key, CDM project manager, made it clear that the recommendations have not been endorsed, nor accepted, by local elected officials, the project’s technical advisory committee (TAC), or the project’s Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC).

The following TAC members were present for this fifth meeting:

- Keith Smith (City of Hamilton)
- Ron Uemura (RAM Engineering)
- John Lavey (Ravalli County)
- Dave Ohnstad (Ravalli County)
- Sheila Ludlow (Montana Department of Transportation – Helena)
- Shane Stack (Montana Department of Transportation – Missoula)

The meeting was facilitated by CDM’s project manager, Jeff Key.

#### Discussion Items

- The discussion of an “urban growth boundary” needs to be taken out and replaced with strong language about the inherent issues facing implementation of the many recommendations contained in the draft. An explanation of implementation realities should supplement this new narrative. Primary concerns voiced by the TAC include:

- Operational and maintenance considerations – many of the roadway recommendations are for an urban roadway where currently a rural roadway exists and is under County jurisdiction. Who pays for and maintains the urban roadway, if and when it is built, and does it become a City roadway at that time?
- Land use and density considerations – many of the recommendations and future corridor locations are premised on the assumption of urban type densities being realized over the planning horizon. This may or may not come to fruition. If not, will a new roadway corridor be required and/or will an urban roadway be justified.
- Companion document to transportation plan – in an ideal situation the transportation plan would go hand in hand with a companion document, probably regulatory in nature, which defines growth and areas outside of the current city limits.

This discussion concluded by agreeing that the issue of land use densities and growth areas are probably much bigger than what can be accomplished in the transportation plan. The transportation plan is a “stand-alone” document based on land use forecasts made through the City’s *Growth Policy Update*. It needs to be clearly articulated that assumptions were made, do exist, and that many of the “future” recommendations contained in the plan are based on these assumptions.

Another desire related to this concern is that the concept of an inter-local agreement should be proposed in the plan, between the City and County, to begin development of a structured relationship to decide on transportation matters as the community grows. This agreement could define the process and set the parameters for cooperation on matters such as roadway maintenance, roadway funding, right-of-way standards, and the transitioning to an urban environment from a predominately rural environment currently found within the study area boundary.

- A review of the recommended non-motorized network was made. The comment was made that the proposed non-motorized network is in essence the first attempt at developing a structured network in and through the community. Jeff stated that he tried to develop this network with sensitivity to implementation hurdles such as existing road widths, availability of funding, and community preferences. The following comments were made by the TAC pertinent to non-motorized transportation:
  - If constraints exist which preclude the recommending of a more aggressive bicycle infrastructure treatment, then specifically list them. For example, if a recommendation is made for “signage only” because the width and available right-of-way of an existing facility is such that a bicycle lane can never be realized, then say so somewhere in the narrative of the text.
  - The preliminary non-motorized network shows a bicycle lane “gap” on Main Street, between US 93 and 4<sup>th</sup> Street. East of 4<sup>th</sup> Street, the bicycle lane (existing) picks up. It is desirable to show the bicycle lane for the entire length of Main Street.

- Remove the majority of the “share-the-road” recommendations, especially in the rural roadway environments such as Westside Road, Ricketts Road, and Tammany Lane. The TAC feels these have little value and do not make these facilities any safer for bicycle travel.
- Show the MRL easement as a potential route for non-motorized travel, and explain the possible hurdles with ownership and required setback distances from the rail tracks.
- Several locations in the preliminary recommendations refer to urban collector standards. For the next iteration of recommendations, specifically call out what urban collector standard is envisioned, along with the lane use configuration, for each of the relevant project recommendations. The City urban standard is an 80 foot right-of-way width, although in special cases a 60 foot right-of-way width may be considered.
- Regarding the “Level of Service” policy recommendations, make sure it is clear in the text where the relevant LOS designations and definitions come from. Specifically reference the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) for level of service, which is different than the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual.
- When language is developed to replace the urban growth boundary section, as discussed on page 1 of these meeting notes, may want to explore defining the level of service standard to be different between the City and the County. For most County road intersections, operations will almost always be at a LOS A or B, so there could be some merit in setting a County LOS threshold at a LOS B instead of a LOS C.
- Regarding the Access Management Section, the County does have an “Access Encroachment Policy” that sets forth required access management guidelines and spacing requirements.

### **Conclusion & Action Items**

The meeting concluded with a brief discussion of logistics and scheduling of the next meeting. **The next, and final, meeting of the TAC (meeting number 6) is scheduled for Monday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010 from 3:00 to 5:00 pm.**